



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUBSM

Sheila Goffe
Director
Government Relations

April 4, 2013

Senator Eric D. Coleman, Co-Chair
Representative Gerald M. Fox Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Judiciary
Room 2500, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT, 06106

RE: American Kennel Club Opposes Raised House Bill 6690

Dear Chairmen Coleman, Fox, and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The American Kennel Club (AKC) writes on behalf of our 61 dog clubs in Connecticut and thousands of Connecticut voters to ask that you not allow Raised HB 6690, An Act Concerning Court Proceedings and the Protection of Animals, to advance out of your committee.

The AKC is the world's largest purebred dog registry and the only not-for-profit purebred dog registry devoted to the health and wellbeing of all dogs. The AKC advocates for the purebred dog as a family companion, works to protect the rights of dog owners, and promotes the ideals of responsible dog ownership. In 2012, the AKC sanctioned and licensed more than 200 events in Connecticut, in which more than 24,300 dogs and their owners participated.

The AKC abhors any type of negligence or cruelty to animals and supports full enforcement of existing negligence and cruelty laws. **However, the AKC is concerned that the creation of court-appointed animal advocates as provided in HB 6690 will result in legal and pragmatic issues regarding who is responsible for an animal, and will ultimately impact the ability and rights of pet owners to freely choose the most appropriate course of care and treatment for their pets.**

For more than two hundred years, laws governing animal ownership and animal care in Connecticut and the United States have been remarkably consistent. These laws have created a stable legal system that promotes responsible animal ownership, deters animal abuse, and promotes innovative, affordable, and quality animal care. Under these long-standing legal traditions, pets are considered the property of their owners while benefitting from laws governing their care and treatment. Animal owners have the sole rights and responsibilities over the care of their animals.

However, under the provisions of HB 6690, individual owners would lose the full right to make the best decisions for their animals by having to share those rights with courts and third parties.

As a result, appointees could use the courts to force a person to make decisions that the owner may not believe to be in the best interest of their animal.

Additionally, providing for such advocates, who are usually reserved to protect the interests of minors or other people lacking legal capacity, may fundamentally impact the legal status of dogs as property. AKC believes that current law does not confuse the roles incumbent to animal owners, and protects animals and their owners better than the law would if HB 6690 were enacted.

The AKC, together with the Connecticut Dog Federation and thousands of your constituent responsible dog owners, respectfully urge the Joint Committee on Judiciary to not move HB 6690 out of committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheila H. Goffe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sheila" being more prominent than the last name "Goffe".

Sheila Goffe
Director, Government Relations

Cc: Members of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary